

Pastoral Care Regarding Sexual Addictions within the Context of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in South Africa



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ABSTRACT

The practice of pastoral care is concerned with humanity's total welfare encompassing the emotional, spiritual, psychological, and personal spheres as they pertain to, but are not limited to, sexuality-related matters. Pastoral care professionals are typically trained to deal with various personal challenges, including depressing sexuality-related issues and addictions. Although the topic of sexual addictions has received reasonable attention within the pastoral care framework, it continues to be considered taboo by most Christian believers and some pastors equally. As a result, pastoral care providers in countries like South Africa do not have solidified guidelines providing practical direction around the question of sexual addictions. Through the combination of the literature reviews and observations, the paper investigated possibilities of developing guidelines that pastoral carers can employ in addressing the challenges faced by those dealing with sexual addictions. These guidelines included an intervention referred to as "Promise Keepers" which focuses on married men, and *Twelve Steps* which is more popular as an intervention employed with substance abuse. Additionally, the paper presented the Falling Forward Manual, an intervention that focuses on Christian men facing challenges with sexual addictions. Beyond the scope of pastoral care and notwithstanding its focus on Pentecostal charismatic churches in South Africa, these guidelines will be beneficial to all churches in South Africa and beyond.

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INTRODUCTION

Pastoral care refers to ministration provided to others mainly by religious leaders to ensure the total wholeness and wellness of God's people. By its very nature, it is a broad, inclusive ministry of healing and growth of those belonging to a congregation and the community through life's cycle, i.e. from birth to death.¹ The people of God go through brokenness and need healing and restoration that only God can provide. Chisale and Buffel describe the purpose of pastoral care as the Christian response to the needs of all members of God's community so that all will enjoy a full and abundant life.² This is further highlighted

¹ A J Van Den Blink, "The Family and Pastoral Care," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 39, no. 2 (1985): 173–81; Kirk A Bingham, "The Postmodern Life Cycle and Pastoral Care and Counseling," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 9, no. 1 (2006): 83–94.

² Sinenhlanhla S Chisale and Olehile Buffel, "The Culturally Gendered Pastoral Care Model of Women Caring for Refugee Girls in a Context of HIV/AIDS," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 40 (2014): 297.

by Magezi in mentioning that the total human being (soul – Hebrew *nephesh*) and his or her need for care and cure (healing) is the central concern of pastoral care.³ Chisale and Buffel explain that in responding to the needs of God’s community, pastoral ministry involves concern for the personal and social well-being of God’s community on issues of physical and psychological health, as well as social life.⁴ Many of those who seek help belong to religious communities and different congregations, in line with South Africa’s diverse societies.

The setting of this article is the Pentecostal charismatic churches within South Africa. South Africa is not only considered one of the most advanced countries in Africa, but it has also seen growth in the number of Pentecostal charismatic churches within the country. According to Ganiel, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians make up 12 percent of the population of the African continent, but about 20 percent of the population in South Africa identify themselves as Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians.⁵ Togarasei asserts that it has been noted time and again that Pentecostalism, especially charismatic Pentecostalism, is the fastest-growing type of Christianity in Africa, and South Africa is no exception.⁶ In explaining the nature of these churches, Kangwa notes that the various Pentecostal charismatic churches have specific common ways of expressing themselves, premised on concerns that are shared between them and that serve as a unifier, which is, the importance attached prophetic word, the power of the Holy Ghost, prosperity of believers and supernatural healing.⁷ He further notes that even though they somehow differ, African Pentecostal charismatic churches in general offer a realistic Christian ministry that seeks to speak to everyday needs such as sickness, lack, economic inactivity, feelings of being alone, fear of evil spirits, and witchcraft.⁸ Additionally, tangible blessings (fruit of the womb and the ability to bear children, health, proper housing, plentiful harvests) are perceived as indications of heavenly blessings. On the other hand, life’s problems are seen as originating from the spiritual realm. Put differently, the origin of all problems is spiritual, and consequently, the answer has to be supernatural.⁹ The popularity of the Pentecostal charismatic is echoed by Togarasei who notes that large numbers of congregants sit in on these churches from various corners of the country and beyond in search of healing.¹⁰ Many come to receive healing from all sorts of ailments, and this will certainly include addictions.

According to Reid, Harper and Anderson, sexual addiction, also known as hyper-sexual behaviour, refers to an intense focus on sexual fantasies, urges, or any sexual behaviour which appears to circumvent human control.¹¹ Examples of such behaviours include excessive masturbation, pornography dependence, protracted promiscuity, multiple extradyadic relationships, excessive online sexual pursuits, solicitation of sex workers or the use of escort services, strip clubs, or other venues associated with the adult entertainment industry, and telephone sex.¹² Perhaps similar to any other addiction, sexual addiction assumes the form of a recurring, semi-chronic sexual disorder characterised by persistent sexual stimulation that continues despite significant negative outcomes.¹³ Buffel states that since the church is the embodiment of solutions, clergy from diverse populations have reported being asked for counsel on matters such as sexual abuse, infidelity, sexual problems between marital partners, pornography, sexual offences, sex education, masturbation, sexually transmitted diseases and sexual identity.¹⁴ He further comments that some pastors, interestingly yet not surprisingly, indicate that they feel less confident about

³ Vhumani Magezi, “History and Developments of Pastoral Care in Africa: A Survey and Proposition for Effective Contextual Pastoral Caregiving,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (November 29, 2019), 3. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i4.5423>.

⁴ Chisale and Buffel, “The Culturally Gendered Pastoral Care Model of Women Caring for Refugee Girls in a Context of HIV/AIDS,” 297.

⁵ Gladys Ganiel, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in South Africa and Zimbabwe: A Review,” *Religion Compass* 4, no. 3 (2010): 132.

⁶ Lovemore Togarasei, “Modern/Charismatic Pentecostalism as a Form of religious’ Secularisation in Africa,” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 41, no. 1 (2015): 57.

⁷ Jonathan Kangwa, “The Role of the Theology of Retribution in the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Africa,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, no. 1 (March 31, 2016), 4. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v37i1.1542>.

⁸ Kangwa, “The Role of the Theology of Retribution in the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Africa,” 7.

⁹ Kangwa, “The Role of the Theology of Retribution in the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Africa,” 4.

¹⁰ Togarasei, “Modern/Charismatic Pentecostalism as a Form of religious’ Secularisation in Africa,” 60.

¹¹ Rory C Reid, James M Harper, and Emily H Anderson, “Coping Strategies Used by Hypersexual Patients to Defend against the Painful Effects of Shame,” *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice* 16, no. 2 (2009): 125–38.

¹² Reid, Harper, and Anderson, “Coping Strategies Used by Hypersexual Patients to Defend against the Painful Effects of Shame,” 126.

¹³ David J Ley, *The Myth of Sex Addiction* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); Aviel Goodman, *Sexual Addiction: An Integrated Approach*. (International Universities Press, Inc, 1998).

¹⁴ O.A. Buffel, “A Pastoral Journey Wrapped up in Grace: Pastoral Counselling with Sexual Addicts in an African Context.,” *Testamentum Imperium: An International Theological Journal* 3 (2011).

addressing sexual issues in comparison to other types of problems they are often consulted about.¹⁵ Such acknowledgement points to the concerning reality that the topic of sexual addictions continues to pose serious challenges among societies and is in need of urgent attention.

Thus, through a review of relevant literature and observations, this paper provides a helpful framework for pastoral care providers to navigate the topic of sexual addictions during their caregiving sessions. The findings are presented in subsequent sections.

METHODOLOGY

This paper combines literature reviews and observations to investigate the possibilities of developing guidelines that pastoral carers can employ in addressing the challenges faced by those dealing with sexual addictions. To achieve this, firstly a definition is provided of sexual addictions as presented in the available literature. Secondly, the focus will be on Biblical sexual addictions and thirdly, on Christianity and sexual addictions. An understanding of pastoral care in relation to sexual addictions will be discussed. Ways to discuss the problem of sexual addiction in the context of religion will be identified and, by extension, this sets the stage for problematising it in the context of pastoral caregiving. Finally, the possible shortcomings in the current interventions are highlighted and guidelines are proposed that can be of assistance within the South African context. Attempting to offer solutions to such shortcomings, an overview is presented of globally recognised interventions as a guideline for the South African clergy in general, but for those within the Pentecostal charismatic churches in particular.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sexual Addiction

The term “sexual addiction”, although still not common, is starting to be mentioned alongside other common addictions such as alcohol and substance abuse.¹⁶ Buffel defines sexual addiction as the behaviour of a person who has an unusually intense sex drive and/or an obsession with sex.¹⁷ This definition relates well with Herkov’s view that the best way to describe sexual addiction is as a continuously growing disorder characterised by compulsive sexual thoughts and acts.¹⁸ To add to this, and with more specificity, Weiss defines it as a sick engrossment with daydreaming about sex, many at times with the intention to pursue casual or sexual relations without any intimate relations, pornographic content, compulsive masturbation, intense romance and treatment of the sex mate as an object spanning for a period of no less than six months.¹⁹ The underlying factor with addictions, including sexual addictions, is the inability to stop despite negative consequences. There is also a certain level of distress associated with efforts to stop or when prevented from engaging in the behaviour. According to Griffin-Shelley, the word ‘addict’ has a Latin root, *ad dictum*, which means “to the dictator.”²⁰ This defines addiction as enslavement and the example of slave and slave master is used as an analogy, meaning that if an individual is addicted to a person, whiskey, sex workers, or cigarettes, they feel that they have no choice and are powerless to stop. They cannot get the person or thing off their mind and they are somehow its slave. Those who are addicted to sex are under its control, and according to this definition, have become slaves to it (Rom. 6:16-18). In addition, according to the same scripture, those that sexual addiction rules are unable to break free from it without the help of God, who is able to turn their slavery to sin into slavery to righteousness. Prof. Elna McIntosh, sexologist and sexual health practitioner, as cited in Makgalemele, highlights the dysfunctionality of sexual addictions and mentions that “sexual obsessions and compulsions are recurrent, distressing and interfere with daily functioning.”²¹ Thus, addicts’ lives are literally consumed by their

¹⁵ Buffel, “A Pastoral Journey Wrapped up in Grace: Pastoral Counselling with Sexual Addicts in an African Context,” 2.

¹⁶ Frederico Duarte Garcia and Florence Thibaut, “Sexual Addictions,” *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 36, no. 5 (2010): 254–60; Laurent Karila et al., “Sexual Addiction or Hypersexual Disorder: Different Terms for the Same Problem? A Review of the Literature,” *Current Pharmaceutical Design* 20, no. 25 (2014): 4012–20.

¹⁷ Buffel, “A Pastoral Journey Wrapped up in Grace: Pastoral Counselling with Sexual Addicts in an African Context,” 7.

¹⁸ M. Herkov, “What Is Sexual Addiction?,” 2006, <http://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-sexual-addictions/000748>.

¹⁹ R. Weiss, “Hypersexuality: Symptoms of Sexual Addiction,” Psych Central, 2012, <http://psychcentral.com/lib/hypersexuality-symptoms-of-sexual-addiction/00011488>.

²⁰ E. Griffin-Shelley, *Sex and Love: Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery* (Praeger Publishers., 1991), 6.

²¹ T. Makgalemele, “When Sex Becomes an Addiction,” *Saturday Star*, April 1, 2006.

desire to get a fix. It may therefore actually be disruptive and lead to an inability to perform other tasks optimally, such as work, interact with family and friends, etc.

Due to the multiplicity in the manifestation of sexual addiction, it stands to reason that any lay person might have difficulty in ascertaining whether it is indeed sexual addiction or not. This is supported by Kwee, Dominguez and Ferrel, who argue that sexual addiction is a disorder that is real but with a lack of diagnostic clarity.²² Additionally, Laaser asserts that sexual addiction has existed for centuries and has been misnamed, mistreated, ignored, or completely undiagnosed.²³ Besides the inability to stop, the progressiveness of the disorder and the obsession or preoccupation with sex and related activities over time is the other common threads found with addictive behaviours. Carnes explains that for sexual addicts, an addictive experience progresses through a four-step cycle that intensifies with each repetition:

- Preoccupation - the trance or mood in which the addict's mind is wholly absorbed by thoughts that are sexual;
- Ritualisation - the addict's own special routines which lead up to the sexual behaviour;
- Compulsive sexual behaviour - the actual sexual act, which is the end goal of the preoccupation and ritualisation; and
- Despair - the feeling of utter hopelessness an addict has concerning his or her behaviour and powerlessness.²⁴

The following diagram represents what Carnes terms the addictive cycle.²⁵ The same information has been modified by others, for example, the manual from Living Waters Canada on Pursuing Relational and Sexual Wholeness in Christ and Edger; however, the concept basically remains the same.²⁶ There is consensus that the addictive cycle starts with pre-occupation and ends with despair, leading to shame and the resolve to stop. For the purposes of this article, the adapted diagram is presented as indicated in the Falling Forward manual.²⁷

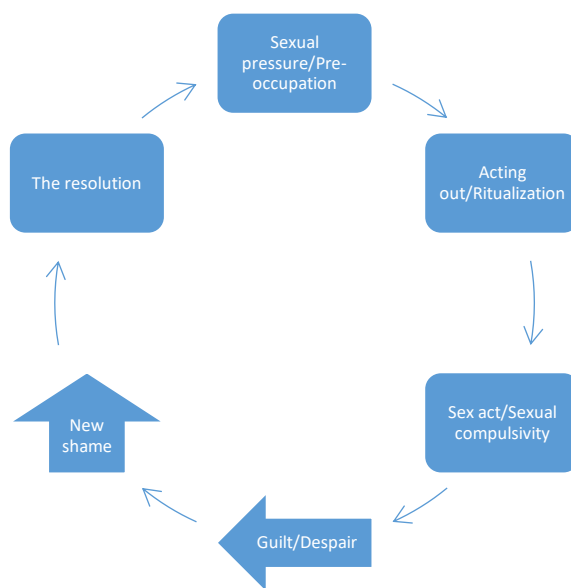


Figure 1: The addictive cycle (Adapted from Carnes)²⁸

²² Amy W Dominguez, Donald Ferrell, and W A Kwee, "Sexual Addiction and Christian College Men: Conceptual, Assessment, and Treatment Challenges," *J Psychol Christ* 26 (2007): 3.

²³ M. R. Laaser, *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004), 15.

²⁴ Patrick Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction* (Hazelden Publishing, 2001).

²⁵ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*.

²⁶ Living Waters Canada, "Training Manual on Pursuing Relational and Sexual Wholeness in Christ.," 2010; Kailla Edger, "Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts," *Journal of Religion and Health* 51, no. 1 (2012): 162–78.

²⁷ C.R. Lockwood, *Falling Forward. The Pursuit of Sexual Purity* (Desert Stream Press, 2000), 29.

²⁸ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*.

Biblical Sexual Addictions

The Bible as the word of God and all that people experience also has examples of sexually dysfunctional behaviours recorded in it. Some references may not be as exact as they are defined now, but inferences can be made from them. For example, the Book of Samuel records the story of King David and Bathsheba. Instead of going to battle with his soldiers, as was the practice and expectation, King David chose to stay at home and sent his commander to lead (2 Sam. 11:1-18). The Bible records that one evening he got up from his bed, walked on his roof and saw a woman bathing (2 Sam. 11:2). Garland and Garland confirm that David sent his men to war while staying home and directing the battle from the comfort of his home, strolling on his rooftop in the cool air and beholding the scene below.²⁹ Upon enquiry, he was informed it was Bathsheba, who was already married to Uriah, the Hittite. The fact that she was married did not stop David from asking for her to be brought in and lying with her. The latter action led to her falling pregnant and in an attempt to hide his sin, he had Uriah killed. The story has been the focus of many scholars and interpreted from many angles. For example, for some, this story is about rape. Ijeoma asserts that Bathsheba had no choice; she was taken forcefully to meet the King, who then exercised his sexual desires by having sexual relations with her.³⁰ For others, it is about the abuse of power and authority. Garland and Garland mention that Bathsheba became a casualty of David's authority, who was meant to lead his people, but instead abused his power.³¹

In the context of sexual addictions and the addictive cycle, David's preoccupation with sex could be one of the reasons he did not go to war. Spring was known as a time when kings went to war. This notion is well captured by Creasy who records that: "In the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent Joab and the king's men and all Israel and they destroyed the Ammonites and they besieged Rabbah."³² Garland and Garland also point out that in springtime, it is acknowledged, that the desire for sensual pleasures increases.³³ However, in keeping with Jewish laws around sexual relations between husband and wife, engagement in sexual relations at a time of communal distress such as famine or war is forbidden, as that is another way a person consecrates self from the suffering of their people.³⁴ Heschmeyer notes that the Old Testament describes three types of people who are called to celibacy: priests preparing for sacrifice, people preparing to receive a message from God, and soldiers preparing for battle.³⁵ The author further writes that celibacy is a way to spiritually prepare for combat, just as much as it is spiritual preparation for the offering of the Temple sacrifice. Abstinence during a war is modelled by Uriah who, even when given an opportunity to be sexually intimate with Bathsheba, refused in solidarity with others who were sleeping in tents and the ark of the Lord that was in the open fields (2 Sam. 11).

On the contrary, despite being the king, the pressure David felt to fulfil his desire seemed to matter more than anything else. This is supported by Nicol, who argues that the king acted quickly and decisively to satisfy his lust and had no regard for the marital status of the woman.³⁶ In addition, Garland and Garland assert that Bathsheba was the eroticised object of the king's lustful thoughts and daydreaming as he had no idea who this beautiful lady was, thus indicating they were strangers.³⁷ As a king, he could have had any woman he desired, as David had countless children born from different women, and he could therefore not have been sexually starved.³⁸ To this end, Ijeoma notes that David had a number of females at his disposal, yet he laid hold of another man's wife to satisfy his sexual desires.³⁹ David's preoccupation with the woman he saw from his rooftop was initiated by finding out who the woman was, and discovering her marital status did not in any way stop him. In fact, Nicol notes that after he had seen her cleansing herself,

²⁹ David E Garland and Diana R Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," *Family and Community Ministries*, 2007, 22.

³⁰ Sokwaibe Queen Ijeoma, "King David's 'Power Rape' and Punishment; An Exegetical Study Of 2samuel 11: 1-27," *IGWEBUIKE: African Journal of Arts and Humanities* 7, no. 3 (2021), 168.

³¹ Garland and Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," 24.

³² Bill Creasy, "The Story of King David," 2021, 9.

³³ Garland and Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," 22.

³⁴ Hannah Rockman, "Sex Shmex—as Long as You Love Your Wife: A Review of the Laws and Guidelines Regarding Sexual Behaviour among Orthodox Jews," *Sexual and Marital Therapy* 8, no. 3 (1993): 265.

³⁵ J. Heschmeyer, *Celibacy for War*, 2015, . www.shamelesspopery.com.

³⁶ George G. Nicol, "David, Abigail and Bathsheba, Nab Al and Uriah: Transformations within a Triangle," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 12, no. 1 (January 1998): 137, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018329808585131>.

³⁷ Garland and Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," 24.

³⁸ Maciej Basiuk, "King David's Fatherhood—the Bright and Dark Sides," *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*, no. 4 (2018), 454.

³⁹ Ijeoma, "King David's 'Power Rape' and Punishment; An Exegetical Study Of 2samuel 11: 1-27," 166.

David is said to have asked more about Bathsheba's identity and to have received detailed information concerning her marital status.⁴⁰ This is despite possible consequences that would follow when it became known that he had slept with another man's wife. These would include the shame associated with this sin and, worse, death as mentioned in Leviticus (20:10-12) which reads: "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, even with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and adulteress must be put to death". Garland and Garland note that David's watching roused the sexual craving which led to him pursuing her and eventually taking action to satisfy his craving to lay with her.⁴¹

Creasy writes that King David did not only "take" another man's wife, but he also betrayed his own officer.⁴² David could have stopped at any of the previous steps of the addiction cycle, but, just like a typical addict, the desire to commit the sexual act superseded all rational thinking. This is in line with the definition by Aghamiri and Luetz of sexual addiction as preoccupations with sexual thoughts and behaviours that interrupt the individual's life and cannot be discontinued even when faced with negative consequences.⁴³ Although no mention is made of how he felt afterward, the Bible records that he sent her away after she was purified. According to Ijeoma, sending her back shows that the King had no marital intentions or love towards her.⁴⁴ When Bathsheba informed him that she was pregnant, David had Uriah return from the war in an unsuccessful attempt to have him sleep with his wife so that the adultery might be covered up, thus covering the shame of sleeping with her and the resultant pregnancy.⁴⁵ When his plan to obscure the issue of paternity was frustrated by Uriah's refusal to sleep with his wife, David sent his death sentence to Joab by the victim's own hand.⁴⁶ The shame of sleeping with Bathsheba bred even more shame and led to further sin. This is no surprise, as Edger mentions that sexual addictions find their root in shame, and the secrecy that follows creates an environment in which sexual addictions thrive in this cycle.⁴⁷ Contrary to the narrative of most addicts, upon confrontation with Prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 12) and the subsequent illness and death of the child born to Bathsheba, David sincerely turned away from his transgression and God forgave him. Rutherford writes that the narrative in 2 Samuel 12 paints David as truly repentant and truly pious.⁴⁸ This is evidenced by the fact that the child born thereafter, Solomon, is loved by God, and through the mouth of Prophet Nathan God names him Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:25). No other mention of David falling into the same sin is recorded in the Bible again, and it can be assumed that David managed through the counsel of Prophet Nathan to break free from his inability to control his sexual drive and gained favour from God.

Religion and Sexuality

The two concepts of religion and sexuality are an inherent and important part of humanity and cannot be divorced from human existence. Leeming notes that from the beginning of human history, religion, and sexuality have shared certain characteristics.⁴⁹ History shows a confusing variety of religions, cults, sects, denominational developments and spiritual movements of every sort.⁵⁰ Combined, the world's religions are a reflection of the geographic, social and linguistic diversity of the planet itself. Due to its complexity and its multidimensional construct, it is almost impossible to capture the essence of what religion is within a single definition. The diversity of religions precludes them from being branches of a single tree, and thus, no single definition of religion seems possible.⁵¹ Sanjakdar defines religion as a system of beliefs and practices concerning the supernatural realm, the 'doing of' religion (religiosity) and can entail reading scriptures, ruminating on the possibilities of being, negotiating spaces in and between the sacred and the

⁴⁰ Nicol, "David, Abigail and Bathsheba, Nab Al and Uriah: Transformations within a Triangle," 137.

⁴¹ Garland and Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," 24.

⁴² Creasy, "The Story of King David," 10.

⁴³ Fakri Seyed Aghamiri and Johannes M Luetz, "Sexual Addiction and Christian Education," in *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Springer, 2021), 444.

⁴⁴ Ijeoma, "King David's 'Power Rape' and Punishment; An Exegetical Study Of 2 Samuel 11: 1-27," 169.

⁴⁵ Nicol, "David, Abigail and Bathsheba, Nab Al and Uriah: Transformations within a Triangle," 134.

⁴⁶ Nicol, "David, Abigail and Bathsheba, Nab Al and Uriah: Transformations within a Triangle," 134.

⁴⁷ Edger, "Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts," 165.

⁴⁸ J. Alexander Rutherford, "The Rhetoric Of Repentance A Literary Reading Of The Rebuke And Restoration Of David In 2 Samuel 11: 27-12: 25," 2017.

⁴⁹ David Leeming, "Religion and sexuality: The perversion of a natural marriage." *Journal of Religion and Health* 42 (2003): 101.

⁵⁰ Thomas A Idinopulos, "What Is Religion?," *CrossCurrents*, 1998, 366.

⁵¹ Idinopulos, "What Is Religion?" 370.

secular, to attending a church or a mosque or a temple.⁵² Thus, each religion is conceived and practised differently as informed by its beliefs.

Van Tongeren, Newbound and Johnson describe religion as a multifarious establishment with many duties, including providing understandable moral guidelines for behaviour and its functions to provide a set of ethically accepted values to guide interpersonal and intergroup behaviour.⁵³ Therefore, religious beliefs and practices form an important resource when discussing human sexuality.⁵⁴ This is not without cause as, according to Langer religion shapes sexual values with sacred law that articulates a range of acceptable sexual behaviours and practices.⁵⁵ In addition, Ojo notes that a religious group may use societal values as its reference point or may resort to internal dynamics or an agenda of renewal in deciding how to regulate sexual behaviour.⁵⁶

Sexuality is as broad and diverse as humanity and is experienced and understood in varied ways. Its expression in how human beings think, what they think about and what is practised in relation to it is just as different. Grebe and Drea note that human sexuality is most broadly defined as the totality of experiences, systems, attributes and behaviour that characterise the sexual sensation, reproduction and intimacy of *Homo sapiens*.⁵⁷ A broader definition is provided by Macleod and McCabe as the central aspect of being human throughout life that encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.⁵⁸ They further note that sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.⁵⁹ In addition, according to Langer, societal values, personal experiences, families, peers, media, religion, law and government all influence sexuality, gender roles and sexual behaviours.⁶⁰ It therefore makes sense that as changes occur in the different spheres of life, human sexuality also metamorphosises. For instance, unlike previously, when matters relating to sexuality were not openly discussed and available, today the media is flooded with content that challenges previously held beliefs and introduces other discussion that questions the very societal systems that influence how sexuality is perceived and experienced.

Both sexual and spiritual wholeness are intricately connected with a fully embodied life.⁶¹ In numerous faith traditions around the world, sexuality and spirituality are essential parts of everyday living. The two are also intertwined, as in the opinion of Van Tongeren et al., religion clearly explicates a code of values that those who subscribe to should strive to uphold without fail.⁶² The social context, of which religion is part, is critical in the formation of attitudes towards sexual relations and behaviours and influences sexual decisions.⁶³ Nzioka notes that religion affirms sexuality as the erotic aspect of human existence that is present in all that people say and think and do, in every relationship with others and in their relationship with God as the source of human refreshment and companionship.⁶⁴ Thus, human sexuality, and especially its expression, is hugely influenced by the beliefs and values associated with religion. The following section specifically focuses on Christianity and its impact, or lack thereof, on the understanding of sexual addictions and on humanity.

⁵² Fida Sanjakdar, "Can Difference Make a Difference? A Critical Theory Discussion of Religion in Sexuality Education," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 39, no. 3 (May 4, 2018): 395, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2016.1272546>.

⁵³ Daryl R Van Tongeren, Hanna Newbound, and Evan Johnson, "The Interactive Effects of Religiosity and Priming Religion Following Recall of a Values Violation," *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* 23, no. 2-3 (2016): 211-24.

⁵⁴ Sanjakdar, "Can Difference Make a Difference? A Critical Theory Discussion of Religion in Sexuality Education," 395.

⁵⁵ Nieli Langer, "Late Life Love and Intimacy," *Educational Gerontology* 35, no. 8 (2009): 755.

⁵⁶ Matthews A Ojo, "Religion and Sexuality: Individuality, Choice and Sexual Rights in Nigerian Christianity," in *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series*, vol. 4 (Citeseer, 2005), 2.

⁵⁷ Nicholas M. Grebe and Christine M. Drea, "Human Sexuality," in *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 1-14, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16999-6_3360-1.

⁵⁸ Ashley Macleod and Marita P McCabe, "Defining Sexuality in Later Life: A Systematic Review," *Australasian Journal on Ageing* 39 (2020): 6.

⁵⁹ Macleod and McCabe, "Defining Sexuality in Later Life: A Systematic Review," 6.

⁶⁰ Langer, "Late Life Love and Intimacy," 755.

⁶¹ Yolanda Turner and William Stayton, "The Twenty-First Century Challenges to Sexuality and Religion," *Journal of Religion and Health* 53, no. 2 (2014): 488.

⁶² Van Tongeren, Newbound, and Johnson, "The Interactive Effects of Religiosity and Priming Religion Following Recall of a Values Violation," 212.

⁶³ Sanjakdar, "Can Difference Make a Difference? A Critical Theory Discussion of Religion in Sexuality Education," 402.

⁶⁴ Jeremiah Ngundo Nzioka, "A Biblical and Theological View on Human Sexuality: A Case Study of Selected Churches in Nairobi," *European Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 6, no. 1 (2022): 20.

Christianity and Sexual Addictions

Christianity is a worldwide religion, with followers from all over the world from diverse backgrounds.⁶⁵ Christian beliefs and practices are reflected in how interactions are defined. For example, for most Christians marriage is between male and female (Gen. 1:27;) and sexual relationship is confined within a marriage relationship (Mal. 2:14; 1 Cori. 7:1-2). In relation to sexual relations, Ash notes that the emphasis in Genesis 1 is on procreation to fulfil the task of dominion.⁶⁶ In addition, he asserts that sex is for the purpose of having children so that these children will share with humanity the privilege and task of caring for God's world. Ojo mentions that traditional Christian theology maintains that sexuality is part of the creation and that it is fundamental to the human experience and Christian identity.⁶⁷ In the same vein, Bacchiocchi asserts that during much of Christian history, sex has been condoned as a necessary evil for producing children and that other considerations, such as the unitive, relational and pleasurable aspects of sex, have been seen as secondary and usually tainted with sin.⁶⁸ Limiting sexual relations to procreation is not only problematic, but it fails to take some of life's realities into consideration. In fact, Benagiano and Mori indicate that the primacy of reproduction is vastly overemphasised, and the insistence on procreation as the end-all of human sexuality is inherently misguided.⁶⁹ The reality of current times is that not all couples are able to bear children and others do not wish to procreate. Bacchiocchi rightly mentions that old age, infertility and genetic diseases are but some of the factors that make childbearing impossible or inadvisable.⁷⁰

To ascribe sexual relations to procreation is not only limited, but it fails to acknowledge that God also intended it for relational purposes. Bacchiocchi indicates that despite early Christians' association of sex with procreation, in the last hundred years, a revolution has taken place in Christian thinking about sex which has somehow affected their perception, and as a consequence the order has reversed with Christians in the twentieth century placing the relational and pleasurable aspects of sex first and the conception of children last.⁷¹ This is because, according to Mohler, sexual pleasure is not an unplanned occurrence of human physiology, instead it is one of the Creator's sweetest gifts to human beings.⁷² Additionally, he asserts that the promise of sexual pleasure and satisfaction is to draw us into the marital covenant, and then the shared joy of physical union is a vital part of the marital bond.⁷³ Bacchiocchi explains that the phrase *becoming one flesh* (Gen. 2:24) sheds considerable light on God's view of sex within a marital relationship.⁷⁴ It shows that God perceives sexual intercourse as a means through which a husband and a wife can be unified, but also implies that the purpose of the sexual act is not only procreational, that is, to produce children, but also psychological, that is, the emotional need to consummate a new oneness-relationship. Joined to each other within this monogamous contract, the man and the woman may be naked and not ashamed (Gen. 2:25).⁷⁵ It is thus critical that Christians bring back to normal positions and nurture the Biblical balance between the relational and procreational functions of sexual activity.

Although sexual relations are beautiful and God-ordained for both procreation and relational purposes, there are instances where perceptions held as influenced by one's beliefs can lead to unhealthy practices. Bacchiocchi accuses Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), also known as Saint Augustine, as the main advocate among other Christian church fathers who moulded the negative attitudes toward sex in general, particularly as he considered sin to be the main cause of uncontrollable sexual urges and fantasies.⁷⁶ In addition, he notes that Augustine's association of original sin with sex has been widely

⁶⁵ Todd M Johnson and Sandra S Kim, "Describing the Worldwide Christian Phenomenon," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 2 (2005): 80-84.

⁶⁶ Christopher Ash, "Christianity and Sexuality," *Deerfield, Carl FH Henry Center for Theological Understanding*, 2009, 10.

⁶⁷ Ojo, "Religion and Sexuality: Individuality, Choice and Sexual Rights in Nigerian Christianity," 5.

⁶⁸ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 2000.

⁶⁹ Giuseppe Benagiano and Maurizio Mori, "The Origins of Human Sexuality: Procreation or Recreation?," *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* 18 (2009): 53.

⁷⁰ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 9.

⁷¹ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 9.

⁷² R. A. Mohler, "The Bible on Sex—The Way to Happiness and Holiness," 2004.

⁷³ Mohler, "The Bible on Sex—The Way to Happiness and Holiness," 1.

⁷⁴ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 9.

⁷⁵ Mohler, "The Bible on Sex—The Way to Happiness and Holiness," 1.

⁷⁶ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 6.

accepted throughout Christian history, conditioning the sexual attitudes not only of Roman Catholics but also of Christians in general.⁷⁷ The reason for this influence maintains Langer, is that in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Old and New Testament forbidding against sexuality in both its specific and general forms have proven to be extraordinarily powerful forces.⁷⁸ According to Bacchiocchi, the adoption of the unbiblical Greek notion of the human body as intrinsically evil has led many Christians through the centuries to have a warped attitude toward sex.⁷⁹ Its effect still lingers, as many today are still uneasy about their marital sexual relations, viewing them as something tainted with sin.⁸⁰ Langer is of the opinion that these views and prohibitions have demanded, or at best justified, repression of sexual thought and conduct, thus providing heavy burdens of guilt and shame [especially about nakedness, masturbation and homosexuality].⁸¹ For the sexual addict, the negative narrative toward sexual relations adds to their struggle. For a sexual addict, an act of masturbation that may be perceived as normal by others may be viewed by him or her as shameful and thus hidden. Arens asserts that when taking into consideration the distinctive role of shame in the causation of sexual addictions and the additional enormous feelings of shame that acting out causes for the addict, a moralistic approach that increases feelings of shame and enhances the pressure for silence and secrecy is detrimental.⁸² When it comes to providing support and care to the sexual addict, there is a need to confront the shame associated with it and the pastoral carer must bring hope and be the support needed to overcome the addiction. This is more important as, although sexuality is one of God's good gifts, and provenance of human happiness, once practiced outside its intended context of marital fidelity, it has the potential to cause more harm to humanity.⁸³

Pentecostal Churches and Sexual Addiction

Pentecostal charismatic churches are amongst the largest groupings of believers globally, and Adogame asserts that the Pentecostal and charismatic movements represent some of the most popular and fastest-growing religious movements within contemporary world Christianity, estimated at over five hundred million adherents worldwide.⁸⁴ In relation to the African continent, Ganiel reports that Pentecostal charismatic Christians make up 12 percent of the population of the African continent.⁸⁵ In fact, Lindhardt argues that Pentecostal charismatic Christianity has moved from previously on the outskirts position to a force to be seriously considered within African Christianity and sub-Saharan African societies in general.⁸⁶ The presence and beliefs and practices of these churches have also not been without controversy, globally and particularly in Africa. According to Ganiel, Pentecostal charismatic pastors take advantage of the vulnerable, taking resources from them with the promise of restoring their health.⁸⁷ She further notes that those who emphasise supernaturalism are abdicating their responsibilities to think and act for themselves. The latter is associated with Pentecostal charismatics and their emphasis on the impact of spirituality on life in general.

In recent times, South Africans have watched on different social media platforms in disbelief as different leaders of these churches have used unconventional practices to convey their spiritual powers. Amongst these practices are feeding people with snakes, grass, petrol and pesticides as part of spiritual healing and fighting demonic spirits.⁸⁸ At the time of writing this article, there were ongoing court cases

⁷⁷ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 2000, 7.

⁷⁸ Langer, "Late Life Love and Intimacy," 755.

⁷⁹ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*.

⁸⁰ Bacchiocchi, *A Biblical View of Sex*, 6.

⁸¹ Langer, "Late Life Love and Intimacy," 755.

⁸² Johannes Arens, "Bound to Shame: Sexual Addiction and Christian Ethics" (Durham University, 2011), 201.

⁸³ R. A. Mohler, "The Bible on Sex—The Way to Happiness and Holiness," 2004, 2.

⁸⁴ Afe Adogame, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in a Global Perspective," *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, 2010, 498.

⁸⁵ Ganiel, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in South Africa and Zimbabwe: A Review," 132.

⁸⁶ Martin Lindhardt, "Introduction: Presence and Impact of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa," in *Pentecostalism in Africa* (Brill, 2015), 1–53.

⁸⁷ Ganiel, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in South Africa and Zimbabwe: A Review," 134.

⁸⁸ Goitseman Matlabe, "'Prophet' Makes Congregants Eat Snakes," IOL, July 14, 2015, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/prophet-makes-congregants-eat-snakes-1885321>; Mookgo S Kgatle, "The Unusual Practices within Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in South Africa: Reflections and Recommendations," *HTS: Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 1–8; Joel Mokhoathi and Nasila S Rembe, "Religious Liberties and the Constitution of South Africa: A Call for Religious Accountability," *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* 116, no. 1 (2017): 1–10...

against the Nigerian-born pastor, Timothy Omotoso of the Jesus Dominion International church, charged with allegations of sexual assault, human trafficking and racketeering,⁸⁹ and the Malawian-born multimillionaire pastor of the Enlightened Christian Gathering church, Shepherd Bushiri, and his wife, charged with fraud and money laundering.⁹⁰ Also recent was the video clip that went viral of the Congolese-born pastor Alph Lukau, in which he claimed to have just prayed and managed to bring a dead man lying in a coffin back to life. Charges of sexual assault and rape against the leader of the Rivers of Living Waters Bishop Zondo are being heard in a court of law in South Africa.⁹¹ Although there are cases of sexual assault before the courts, there is a claim that many more go unreported due to the fear people have that these leaders have special powers and are able to pronounce curses upon those who dare report them. Sometimes these very acts of sexual exploitation are done under the pretence of providing healing relating to infertility, etc. In the context of sexual addiction, the abdication of responsibilities and apportionment of blame to forces outside of one's control provides the perfect excuse for not seeking help.

In Africa, and by implication in South Africa, cultural practices and phrases that support multiple partners have led to acts of sexual compulsivity going untreated. *Monna ke selepe wa adimanwa*, loosely translated as 'a man is an axe, he is borrowed from house to house', implies that just as an axe does not lose its sharpness, men too do not lose their prowess. Phrases such as this are used to justify the adulterous behaviour of men in some African contexts. Familusi mentions that when it comes to extramarital sexual affairs, the rules apply differently to husbands and wives with an expectation that the woman remains faithful no matter what and is further expected to remain calm when their husbands has been found to have cheated on them.⁹² The practice within the church is in most instances similar, and improper sexual behaviours are at times covered in secrecy. In fact, Del Villar Tagle, referring to the reaction to sexual abuse, indicates that we have been taught to carry our cross in silence and forgive those who transgress against us unconditionally, just as Jesus is said to have done.⁹³

As indicated previously in this article, what may start as not so improper, if not dealt with, can progress to sexual addiction and abuse within the church. The enormity of some of the cases in the media and the number of victims is a clear indication of the addict's inability to stop despite the possible consequences. Although the reported cases within the Pentecostal church and those in the public eye involve the pastors, ordinary church members cannot be ruled out from the same challenges that face their spiritual leaders. This is because sexual addiction knows no social standing, gender, race, or even religiosity. Unfortunately, those who struggle with sexual addiction are afraid to seek help within the church. Thornton reports that Pentecostalism teaches that once sanctified, believers assume that spiritually they are no longer of this world where those who don't believe exist.⁹⁴ He also notes that the authoritative injunction against acting on sexual desires is especially difficult for men to embrace and is among the more challenging demands of faith that male converts claim to confront.⁹⁵ The inability to acknowledge that sexual addiction is a reality serves as a hindrance to seeking the truth and in fact disregards Mark 2:17 as the gospel truth.

Pastoral Care and Sexual Addictions

Although the topic of sexual addictions has received reasonable attention within the pastoral care framework, it continues to be considered taboo by most Christian believers and some pastors equally. This, however, does not negate the fact that pastors are still confronted by and expected in some instances

⁸⁹ Mookgo S Kgatle and Maria Frahm-Arp, "Abuse, Power and Discourse in the Public Trial of Timothy Omotoso," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43, no. 1 (2022): 2270; Hulisani Ramantswana, "Wathint'umfazi, Wathint'imbokodo, Uzakufa [You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock, You Will Die]: Dinah and Tamar as Rape Protestors," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019).

⁹⁰ Thabang R Mofokeng, "'The Weird You Shall Always Have': A Historical Look into the Causative Factors behind Neo-Prophetic Scandals in South Africa," in *The Use and Abuse of the Spirit in Pentecostalism* (Routledge, 2020), 24–52.

⁹¹ Sandisele L Xhinti and Hundzukani P Khosa-Nkatini, "Black Women's Bodies as Sacrificial Lambs at the Altar," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 7940.

⁹² Olumuyiwa O Familusi, "African Culture and the Status of Women: The Yoruba Example," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5, no. 1 (2012): 304.

⁹³ María Soledad Del Villar Tagle, "The Victims of Abuse in Ecclesiastical Contexts as a Theological Place. Moving from Silence and Concealment to Words and Recognition.," *Concilium* (00105236), no. 4 (2023), 71.

⁹⁴ Brendan Jamal Thornton, "Victims of Illicit Desire: Pentecostal Men of God and the Specter of Sexual Temptation," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 2018, 138.

⁹⁵ Thornton, "Victims of Illicit Desire: Pentecostal Men of God and the Specter of Sexual Temptation," 140.

to journey with congregants who have concerns relating to sexual challenges. Turner and Stayton point out that most pastors know they are completely not ready to assist their congregants and numerous recognise they have not genuinely explored those relations for themselves.⁹⁶ Additionally, clergy realise they lack the knowledge and understanding, or equipment to be effective counsellors or address the underlying or interwoven spiritual nature of the congregants' concerns.⁹⁷ The clergy's unpreparedness does not in any way mean that the church is precluded from providing direction and care. In fact, Nzioka emphasises that the church has a responsibility to offer solutions and to shine a light in these dark times, particularly in helping congregants and society at large in overcoming sexual perversions, addictions and the abuse of human sexuality.⁹⁸ Turner and Stayton argue that despite the lack of knowledge, there is a generalised desire among the clergy for ways to engage their congregations about the gift of sexuality and to incorporate sexual concerns and issues into the life, study and worship of their congregations.⁹⁹ By being open and willing to listen to those who struggle with sexual addictions, the clergy and, by implication, the church becomes a vehicle for providing support and care to those who need it to break the cycle of addictions. This is in line with Nzioka who mentions that people laden with sexual problems do not need condemning.¹⁰⁰ Christ did not condemn. What such people need is grace, love, and protection. They also need the advice of the Lord Jesus: "Go and sin no more".

Buffel thinks that it seems sexual addiction is here to remain and thus prudent that pastoral counsellors equip themselves on the best ways of journeying together meaningfully and pastorally with God's people as they struggle with sexual addictions, and as they search for healing and freedom.¹⁰¹ Pastoral care as a support for the sexual addict is especially critical in enabling the sexual addict to reverse the faulty beliefs they have about themselves. This support can be from the family, the church and the community, to name but a few. This is echoed by Magezi, who writes that within the African context, the extended family and by implication the community, are important and play a vital role in the healing process.¹⁰² The importance of support is highlighted by Carnes who indicates that those who are addicted must establish their sense of being in a community that cares and with the support, addicts can stay straight as they struggle to make meaning of their lives.¹⁰³ Edger mentions that unfortunately people hide their sexuality and isolate themselves from others for fear of condemnation.¹⁰⁴ According to Buffel, denial of its existence, the accompanying secrecy, the shame associated with it and, in most cases, the judgemental approach associated particularly with Christians paralyses possibilities of dealing with sexual addiction effectively and graciously.¹⁰⁵ Already the perceptions that some Christians have concerning sexuality are unhealthy, and any other sexual behaviour that is considered untoward is in most instances treated harshly. The negative perspective of sexuality, present in utero during apostolic times among some Christians, developed fully during the early church, shaping the sexual attitudes of Christians up to modern times.¹⁰⁶ Sexual addictions over a period of time affect relations with significant others not only because of the emotional pain that it causes but also as a result of the emotional distance the addict is likely to create to maintain the secrecy and cover the shame. Carnes maintains that one of the terrible outcomes of addiction is the addict's withdrawal from normal social interactions.¹⁰⁷ The more deeply involved in the compulsive sexual life the addicts become, the more segregated they become from their parents, spouses and children.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁶ Turner and Stayton, "The Twenty-First Century Challenges to Sexuality and Religion."

⁹⁷ Turner and Stayton, "The Twenty-First Century Challenges to Sexuality and Religion," 484.

⁹⁸ Nzioka, "A Biblical and Theological View on Human Sexuality: A Case Study of Selected Churches in Nairobi," 21.

⁹⁹ Turner and Stayton, "The Twenty-First Century Challenges to Sexuality and Religion," 484.

¹⁰⁰ Nzioka, "A Biblical and Theological View on Human Sexuality: A Case Study of Selected Churches in Nairobi," 22.

¹⁰¹ Buffel, "A Pastoral Journey Wrapped up in Grace: Pastoral Counselling with Sexual Addicts in an African Context."

¹⁰² Vhumani Magezi, "Community Healing and the Role of Pastoral Care of the Ill and Suffering in Africa," *In Die Skriflig* 40, no. 3 (2006): 505.

¹⁰³ Magezi, "History and Developments of Pastoral Care in Africa: A Survey and Proposition for Effective Contextual Pastoral Caregiving."

¹⁰⁴ Edger, "Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts," 165

¹⁰⁵ Buffel, "A Pastoral Journey Wrapped up in Grace: Pastoral Counselling with Sexual Addicts in an African Context," 8.

¹⁰⁶ Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Biblical View Of Sex," 2000, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 13.

Proposed Framework and Guidelines

Provision of the needed support for the sexual addict to find normality, several strategies or interventions are employed. One such intervention is called “Promise Keepers” which is gender specific and focuses on men. Edger explains that Promise Keepers hold men accountable for their behaviours, encourage communication within their marriages and stress accountability as a key factor in the forgiveness of sexual sin.¹⁰⁹ He further explains that men meet in “accountability groups” to discuss their issues with other men and are required to answer to their group about resolving their identified issues. Donovan notes that Promise Keepers’ writings on prayer and sexual purity aim to help men overcome daily problems of practice as they attempt to act on a new model of masculinity.¹¹⁰ He further adds that much of the advice depicts wives as the beneficiaries of Christ-like masculinity; men should compliment and show respect to their wives, engage in spiritual explorations with them and remain faithful to them in mind and practice. The approach’s strength is that it supports male leadership within marriage and Christ-like masculinity which precludes men from exercising unrestrained power.¹¹¹ The challenge that can be identified in this approach is that it assumes that only married men have sexual challenges, such as sexual addiction, and thus need support. Its emphasis on being born again excludes men within the community who are non-religious. It also does not seem to embrace cultural diversity of religiosity in general.

When considering the uniqueness of Africa and its strong emphasis on culture and communal life amongst others, it is imperative that any approach take cognisance of these elements. According to Carnes, each and every kind of uncontrollable behaviours may be knitted in the context of sexual addiction.¹¹² Thus, by implication, a programme such as *Twelve Steps*, with some adaptations, can be utilised successfully in dealing with sexual addiction, especially as it has been successful in treating addictions other than the originally intended pathological behaviour, i.e. alcohol addiction. In explaining why the *Twelve Steps* programme is successful, Carnes notes that while the compulsive behaviour may differ, all share the common reality of the sexually addictive system and its destructive cycle.¹¹³

In addition, Carnes asserts that *Twelve Steps* can halt or bring changes to the addictive system and is capable of restoring the original ability to engage in meaningful relationships through the replacement of dysfunctional or faulty beliefs in addicts and co-addicts with new beliefs.¹¹⁴ The strength of the *Twelve Steps* programme is that it is for both men and women who are struggling with sexual addiction, as well as their families or significant others who are affected. The addict walks in the company of others who have walked the journey and are still doing so. This ties in well with the assertion by Magezi when referring to pastoral care specifically within the African context.¹¹⁵ He notes that pastoral care should have a strong element and focus on communal life. A person prospers when he or she shares life with others and lives in communion with others.

Pastoral care should also address spirituality issues. There is a need to acknowledge the widespread belief in the power of the spiritual forces and not ignore them.¹¹⁶ The emphasis on family involvement and the community to a certain extent takes away the stigma of sexual addiction and enhances the family support. Kasambala follows up Kalilombe’s understanding of spirituality (theologian and scholar who dedicated quality time to the study of spirituality in an African context) and says that an African spirituality could be explained as consisting of African people’s attitudes, beliefs and practices as they strive to reach out toward the super-sensible realities: God, the spirits and the invisible forces in the universe.¹¹⁷ In this way, an effort is made to understand how all these play a role in influencing behaviour and how the same

¹⁰⁹ Edger, “Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts,” 169-170.

¹¹⁰ Brian Donovan, “Political Consequences of Private Authority: Promise Keepers and the Transformation of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Theory and Society* 27, no. 6 (1998): 830.

¹¹¹ Brian Donovan, “Political Consequences of Private Authority: Promise Keepers and the Transformation of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Theory and Society* 27, no. 6 (1998): 828.

¹¹² Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 18.

¹¹³ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 134.

¹¹⁴ Carnes, *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 138.

¹¹⁵ Magezi, “History and Developments of Pastoral Care in Africa: A Survey and Proposition for Effective Contextual Pastoral Caregiving.”

¹¹⁶ Magezi, “History and Developments of Pastoral Care in Africa: A Survey and Proposition for Effective Contextual Pastoral Caregiving.” 8.

¹¹⁷ Amon Eddie Kasambala, “The Impact of an African Spirituality and Cosmology on God-Images in Africa: A Challenge to Practical Theology and Pastoral Ministry,” 2005, 303.

can efficiently play a role in healing. Additionally, and significantly, Kasambala notes that to an African person, pastoral care without fail embraces the care of life within the context of community. Thus effective pastoral ministry is that which takes place in a community setting rather than in a one-room office. African approaches to pastoral care and pastoral theology are thus communal rather than focused on individual persons.¹¹⁸ At the same time, the sexual addict has a great role to play in the recovery process.

The Falling Forward programme (originally called Salt) is a time-proven accountability and recovery group for men struggling with pornography, lust, masturbation and other forms of habitual sexual behaviour. Falling Forward proclaims the truth - Jesus is the answer to any sin, including the sin of sexual addiction and that through Him believers can overcome. The programme is for all men, aged 18 or over, who struggle with sexual purity and want to be free from the damaging effects of sexual brokenness and addiction. The programme is run in the context of small groups. Weekly meetings include worship, teaching and small groups. Accountability and prayer are two of the major components of the small groups.¹¹⁹ The material can also be used by female addicts, but they need to realise that it was not specifically written for them.¹²⁰ From the information provided, the Falling Forward programme is specifically for the Christian who is struggling with sexual addictions. In this instance, the Christian addict needs to be in a position to embrace God's forgiveness for the intervention to be effective. This is important as, according to Visagie, a person caught up in a soul-destroying spiral of sexual addictiveness will experience feelings of disgrace at a level that will make it extremely difficult for the person to actualise the theological truth of God's grace in his or her situation.¹²¹ God is the ultimate Healer, and those who seek healing must be willing to let God heal them.

Only three approaches were mentioned above, which are available globally, but there are many others that are available and can be used by pastoral carers as a means to deal with the challenges of sexual addictions. The emphasis of any intervention, in addition to fostering healthy sexual beliefs, is that God remains the faithful Father through Christ the Saviour, and that the status of his or her once-reborn identity in Christ, as achieved by the saving blood of Jesus, has not changed.¹²² Continued support, especially from the family and significant others, cannot be overemphasised. Some of the stereotypes and practices, especially with the community and the church, need to be reconsidered and openly discussed and challenged. After all, the Sesotho saying *monna o apeswa tsheha ke banna ba bang* applies, loosely translated as 'other men will hide the nakedness of another man.'

Discussion Summary

In this paper, a definition of sexual addictions as presented in the available literature was provided. The Biblical narration of King David was presented and an analysis of how it can be linked to the notion of sexual addiction was. The understanding of sexuality and how religion and specifically Christianity's views can impact sexual behaviours have been discussed. Some of the challenges that Pentecostal charismatics face that are indicative of the presence of the possible scourge of sexually improper behaviour within the church were highlighted. The role of pastoral care and its importance in providing care to the sexual addict and addressing the shame that is usually associated with the phenomenon were discussed. In order to provide effective care, three interventions that are available globally were briefly mentioned, the possible shortcomings of these interventions were identified and guidelines were proposed that can be of assistance within the South African context and within the Pentecostal charismatic churches in particular.

CONCLUSION

Sexual addiction is a reality that affects many irrespective of gender and beliefs. There are those who allege that sexual addiction is a new phenomenon. However, there is evidence that since time immemorial, the ability to control the fulfilment of sexual desire has been a challenge to many. Pastoral carers play a

¹¹⁸ Amon Eddie Kasambala, "The Impact of an African Spirituality and Cosmology on God-Images in Africa: A Challenge to Practical Theology and Pastoral Ministry," 2005, 301.

¹¹⁹ www.desertstream.org

¹²⁰ Lockwood, *Falling Forward. The Pursuit of Sexual Purity*, XIV.

¹²¹ Innes Visagie, "The Use of Biblical Teachings on Grace in Counseling Sexual Addiction," *Testamentum Imperium* 3 (2011): 1-15,12.

¹²² Visagie, "The Use of Biblical Teachings on Grace in Counseling Sexual Addiction," 12.

very critical role in ensuring the physical health and wholeness of those they minister to. Therefore it is important that they are able to provide efficient interventions to those who seek help without further condemning them. For the Pastoral carer to provide care, he or she needs to acknowledge their own shortcomings and discomfort in addressing challenges that are sexual. This paper has discussed three interventions that are available globally and highlighted the possible shortcomings of these. These are, but guidelines, and the Pastoral carer would also need to take the specific circumstances of the one seeking help into consideration. He or she would also need to acknowledge their role in dispelling the stigma and shame associated with sexual addiction in order to encourage those who need help to come forward. The church and Pastoral carers are vehicles that God uses to bring healing to His people, and those who struggle with sexual addictions are not an exception.

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